Zero for zero initiative in Doha round

650. SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state the India's official position on the zero for zero sectoral initiatives in the Doha round?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): The Government opposes the Zero for Zero sectoral initiatives under Non Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) in the Doha round as these proposals are likely to create an inverted duty structure, distort the tiered tariff structural and adversely affect the sensitive domestic sectors.

Effect of bird flu on chicken export

651. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cases of bird flu affected the export of chicken from India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Setting up of new tea gardens

652. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the tea plants of the tea gardens in the country are more than 70 years old;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that as a result of the old aged plants, the tea production in the country has been decreasing rapidly, if so, the year-wise details thereof for the last three years;

(d) the action taker/being taken for re-plantation of new plants to increase the production thereof; and

(e) the locations where new tea gardens are expected to be set up particularly in Uttar Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, sir.

(b) It is estimated that 38% of the total tea area in the country has already crossed the threshold economic age limit of 50 years. Another 9% of the area is in the age bracket of 40-50 years.

(c) The productivity of the old aged bushes is low, but there has not been reduction in production at the national level as substantial area has been brought under new planting during the course of last 10 years and the production from the young plantations is offsetting the productivity loss due to the old aged tea bushes.